

THANKSGIVING DAY SERVICE
The Pieterskerk
Leiden
Thursday November 26th
11 a.m.

Each year, on Thanksgiving morning, there is a non-denominational service in the historic Pieterskerk in Leiden. For many who don't know, the area surrounding the Pieterskerk is where the Pilgrims worked and lived for 11 years, from 1609 to 1620. From Leiden, they talked about a new continent that was "fit for habitation."

Many who landed on the site of Plymouth in the year 1620 knew Leiden. In fact, descendants of Moses Fletcher, a signer of the Mayflower Compact, still live and work there. That family is the only non-American members of the Mayflower Society.

The Thanksgiving Day Service is approximately one hour. It is a combination of a civil ceremony and a Service of Thanksgiving. Protestant ministers, a Catholic priest and a Jewish rabbi and cantor participate. The choir of the American School and the band play. Adrienne West and Tony Ward sing Let Us Break Bread, God Bless America and He's Got the Whole World in His Hands. The Scouts do the flag ceremony, the Mayor of Leiden speaks of the history and the Honorable Fay Hartog Levin, and U.S. Ambassador to the Netherlands delivers the President's Thanksgiving Day Proclamation. Joke Koet, a descendant of Moses Fletcher briefly tells her story as traditionally does a young student.

After the Service, people gather briefly for coffee and cookies before they go home and cook. We say that being in Leiden on Thanksgiving is like "being home" or more correctly, the home of our nation's beginnings."

We hope you will join us. Bring your Dutch friends and friends from everywhere. Also, we would welcome a "cookie contribution" for the coffee after the service. Any cookies will do! For your convenience, car pool if possible.

The Thanksgiving Day Service is sponsored by OAR – Overseas Americans Remember.

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